Robert Medley, *Drawn from the Life: A Memoir.* London and Boston: Faber and Faber, 1984. 251 pp. $27.95.

"The Group Theatre," directed by Rupert Doone, is remembered as the organization that sponsored and presented, in the years 1934-39, the verse dramas of Auden and Isherwood, of Louis MacNeice and of Stephen Spender. An account of the means by which the organization came into existence and how it formed part of the artistic world of 'thirties London lies at the center of the present book, an autobiographical sketch by Robert Medley who was Auden's school chum, Doone's life-long companion, and a decorative painter in his own right.

Rupert Doone seems to have been a person of restless but undoubted talent. As a ballet dancer he worked with Diaghilev, and when the Diaghilev company folded he brought some of the ideals of the *Gesamtkunstwerk* to London, to a group of rather typically English middle-class enthusiasts seething with directionless revolt against Victorian standards of seriousness and respectability. The Bloomsbury Group were among the earliest of Medley's patrons; the artistic middle-class in London (and the bohemian aristocracy) were quick to appreciate the air of savage frivolity that marks Eliot's *Sweeney Agonistes* (which the company performed — bemasked and choreographed — in 1934) as well as the early verse of Auden and the early plays of Bertolt Brecht (said to have visited the company in 1934). The power of this anti-humanist esthetic, related to current Communist Party views but not (Medley insists) derived from them, is shown by the quality of the artists it attracted — Tyrone Guthrie, Benjamin Britten, John Piper for example — and its direct descent from the European avant-garde theatre appears in the patronage given to the company by Michel Saint-Denis, himself Copeau's assistant and nephew. And as Medley points out, much of the ideal of an integrated company relying mainly on the work of contemporary writers was picked up by George Devine at the Royal Court Theatre in 1956 and (one might add) is represented today by organizations like the Joint Stock Company.

Medley has some interesting remarks on the difficulty of finding suitable finales for the Auden-Isherwood plays, but such theatrical criticism is rare in the book before us. Mostly this is a collection of cultural gossip — who came to which parties wearing what. Medley has known a great many persons of some distinction; but most of them seem now, from the perspective of 1984, only to be making faint though extravagant gestures through the distorting mists of time. We can see their mouths open and shut but we cannot tell what they are trying to say. Indeed the world that Medley describes lost nearly all its impetus when it was broken apart by the coming of the second World War.

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# THEATRE SURVEY

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33 *Ibid.*, II, 221.

34 See *Dessein du Poème de la Grande Pièce des Machines de la Naissance de'Hercule, dernier ouvrage de Monsieur de Rotrou, représentée sur le Théâtre du Marais par les comédiens du Roi,* Paris, René Baudry, 1649. For discussion of the play, see Deierkauf-Holsboer, *Théâtre du Marais,* II, 30-31.

35 Celler (Ludovic Leclerc, dit), *Les décors, les costumes et la mise en scène au XVIIe siècle (1615-1680)* (Paris, 1869), pp. 70-72.

36 Bjurström, p. 121, notes that Buffequin "excelled at machinery for supernatural appearances" and draws attention to the moment in act II of *La Naissance d'Hercule* when "three gods flew on separate courses simultaneously round the heavens."

37 Nicola Sabbattini, *Pratica di fabricar scene e machine ne'teatri* (Ravenna, 1638), chap. 37.

38 "Giacomo Torelli, Sir Philip Skipton and Stage Machinery for the Venetian Opera," *Theatre Journal,* 32 (December 1980), 450.

39 The fullest account of this production, based on extensive contemporary documentation, remains that of Henry Prunières, *L'Opéra italien en France avant Lulli* (Paris, 1913), pp. 86-150.

40 It is Agne Beijer who has argued that this system, perhaps best observed in the late work of Inigo Jones in England, may already have found its way to Paris: "That a system very similar to that of Inigo Jones, perhaps even inspired by him, was in operation for the productions of *Mirame* and of the *Prospérité* [*des Armes de France*] seems to me highly probable . . . . In the article quoted . . . I suggested that towards the end of the century [the] stage [of the Hotel de Bourgogne] was equipped with wings and shutters capable of being moved in grooves and it seems likely that they had already been installed before 1650." ("Une Maquette de décor récemment retrouvée pour le *Ballet de la Prospérité des Armes de France,* dansé à Paris, le 7 février 1641: Etude sur la mise en scène au Grand Théâtre du Palais-Cardinal avant l'arrivée de Torelli," in *Le Lieu théâtral à la Renaissance,* edited by Jean Jacquot [Paris, 1964], pp. 398 & 401). The article to which Beijer refers in this quotation is his own and is entitled "Le Théâtre de Charles XII et la mise en scène du théâtre parlé au XVIIe siècle", *Revue d'histoire du théâtre,* 8 (1956), 197-214.

41 Quoted by Lemoine, p. 16.

42 Quoted by Charles Niemeyer, "The Hôtel de Bourgogne: France's First Popular Playhouse," *Theatre Annual* (1947), p. 73.

43 Lawrenson, p. 167.

Harry William Pedicord

# MASONIC THEATRE PIECES IN LONDON 1730-1780

The Age of Reason brought with it a new faith in the future of humanity which evolved from abstract ideas into a tremendous social power. Nowhere is this more evident than in the increasing influence of Freemasonry in England throughout the eighteenth century. Almost fifty years ago Bernard Fäy gave an eloquent tribute to this phenomenon: "... It [the new faith] became a social force and a concrete fact through the agency of Freemasonry which at once accepted it and advocated it; the great historical importance of modern Freemasonry results from this attitude that it took then and to which it has since consistently adhered...."[1]

Between the 10th and 13th centuries in particular, and lingering on far into the 15th and 16th, ancient Freemasonry flourished among what has been termed "operative" masons. G. W. Speth has described these masons as "... a group of builders scattered throughout the country at work on edifices chiefly of an ecclesiastical character, who, whilst employed thereon, are gathered together in Lodges consisting of a master-mason directing the work, fellows of the craft working as journeymen, and apprentices serving their time."[2] Perhaps it was inevitable that by the 17th century such "operative" masons should have admitted gentlemen into their lodges who were to be known as "speculative" masons, to benefit from their patronage and goodwill, so that their lodges gradually become almost entirely "speculative." Speth points out that this meant the gradual dropping of apprentices from membership and the creation of lodges as assemblages of gentlemen. He writes:

> They still had, perhaps, a sprinkling of operative masons in higher position, such as master builders, architects, and so on, but ultimately even the ordinary journeyman ceased to form a part of the Lodge which had now become . . .

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speculative, having no longer any trade object in view. We must remember that during these centuries education and refinement of manners among the higher classes were making great strides, and that the difference between the gentleman and the workman was every year more marked, and we can hardly imagine that the two classes would feel quite comfortable in the society of each other. . . .[3]

Before we reject such a view as superior and class-conscious we should recall the influence of the two preceding centuries — the invention of printing, the Renaissance, the concept of a young gentleman's Grand Tour, and the emergence of the "Augustan style" in England's architecture. No gentleman of the 17th century would confess to favoring the "Gothic" mode and the trade of a master-mason appeared to be gone, replaced by the architects such as Christopher Wren and Inigo Jones who now prepared professionally through printed books and foreign travel. But in 1666 the fire of London was to change all this. Now the ancient lodges were revived or newly-formed for work throughout London such as the rebuilding of the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, chartered by Charles II to the Masons' Company in 1677. And with the revival of masonry came the formation of new lodges in an age of social clubs and the fashionable interest in architecture. It was time for the creation of a central authority in Freemasonry.

On St. John the Baptist's Day, 24 June 1717, four masonic lodges met at The Goose and Gridiron Alehouse in London, at the north end of St. Paul's, to form a Grand Lodge of Free and Accepted Masons in England.[4] By 1721 there were twelve lodges represented in the new Grand Lodge; by 1723 the total was thirty.[5] Ireland formed a Grand Lodge in 1725, Scotland in 1736.[6] Such was the interest generated by the revived secret order that membership continued to be embraced actively by many prominent and highly placed personages — lawyers and physicians, clergymen, writers, artists and theatre people, and especially the English merchant class.

A decade after the formation of their Grand Lodge, Freemasons had become a vital force in the theatrical scene, both before and behind the stage curtain.[7] By this time the Craft not only supported the neoclassical vogue which moulded attitudes toward religion, philanthropy, nationalism, education, manners and morality, but also actively encouraged the arts, supported brother actors and persons in distress, and by their official presence put upon theatre patrons the stamp of its own decorum, and occasionally offered its doctrines to the public in the form of opera, drama, oratorio, and pantomime.

The earliest known Masonic piece for the London theatres is an "opera" written by William Rufus Chetwood, prompter at Drury Lane Theatre



from 1722-23 to 1741-42, and author of *A General History of the Stage* (1749). His opera, called *The Generous Freemason; or, The Constant Lady, with the Comic Humours of Squire Noodle and his Man Doodle,* was presented for the first time in the summer of 1730 at Oates and Fielding's Great Theatrical Booth at the George Inn Yard, Smithfield, 20 August to 7 September, during Bartholomew Fair. In the fourteen playing days at the Fair an average of two or more performances a day were given.[8] Then the piece was transferred to Oates and Fielding's Booth in Bird Cage Alley, 9-23 September, Southwark Fair.[9] In all, there were approximately fifty-six or more performances.

Chetwood published *The Generous Freemason* in London, 1731, and prefixed the following Dedication: "To the Right Worshipful the Grand Master, Deputy Grand Master, Grand Wardens, and the rest of the Brethren of the Ancient and Honourable Society of Free and Accepted Masons, This Opera is Humbly Inscribed by your most Obedient and Devoted Servant, The Author, a Freemason." The musical score provided a total of twenty-five songs and a symphony composed by Galliard, Charke, Sheeles, and Henry Carey, to a libretto consisting of the traditional alternations between serious and comic scenes.

Act I scene i is set in a garden. Sebastian, a Freemason, decides to elope with Maria to his rich uncle's home in Spain, where the uncle is the British Consul. But the young man is most reluctant to depart, since it will deprive him of his Masonic brothers. His consolation rests in his knowledge that "all Climes the Brotherhood adorn." Act I scene ii takes place in the hall of Sir Jasper Moody's house, where that worthy is planning to marry his Daughter Caelia to Squire Noodle, a comic simpleton. But Caelia loves Clerimont, a handsome young man-about-town, and the couple hopes to outwit both father and the intended bridegroom. Evidently the comic scenes are introduced to contrast Freemasons (Sebastian and Mirza) with "profanes" such as Squire Noodle and his man Doodle.

Act II scene i finds Sebastian and Maria on their voyage to Spain and about to be attacked by pirates. The ship's captain warns Sebastian about trying to resist, but the young man insists that "A Briton and a Mason cannot fear." But, alas, they are captured by Mirza, high admiral of Tunis, who takes his prisoners to the royal court. Meanwhile, in scene ii Noodle and Doodle bring a Fiddler to serenade Caelia, whose maid Lettice rewards their efforts with a bucket of water. Scene iii is set at the Court of Tunis where the King immediately falls in love with Maria, his Queen with Sebastian. After a song and a Dance of Moors, Sebastian refuses the monarch's offer of freedom at the price of changing his religion and the couple are taken away to prison. Scene iv returns to old Moody's house,

where Caelia conspires with Lettice to outwit her father. The maid urges Caelia to pretend to a vow she'll never marry any man who is not a Mason, and they both persuade Lettice's swain Davy to initiate Noodle and Doodle as mock Masons.

Noodle is delighted at the prospect and readily agrees. In a mock ceremony Noodle is tied to a chair, his face lathered with black paint from a "Basin of Antiquity" made, so they say, from "half of the Queen of Egypt's great pearl (which she used in treating Marc Antony in the Highlands of Scotland)." Noodle is told that this basin was given to the honourable society by Alexander the Great "when he turned Protestant after conquering North-Wales." He is then shown the lodge's greatest piece of Antiquity, a penknife made from "Eve's Spanish needle that sew'd Adam's Fig Breeches when they were stripp'd by the Turks at the Siege of Namur." As a final indignity Noodle is dumped into a sack supposed to be "the Queen of Sheba's petticoat, made of the Webs of the Feet of the East-Indian Bird of Paradise, and the whalebone made of one of the hairs of King Brogdignagian's beard, brought over by Captain Lemuel Gulliver." Noodle and Doodle are laughed out of countenance.

Act III scene i finds Sebastian and Maria in prison in the keeping of Mirza, who reveals that his parents were British and that he himself is a Freemason. The three of them make their escape to freedom, leaving Mirza's letter to the King and Queen: "I had no other Motive than to assist the Virtuous. — If your Majesty will weigh this Action calmly in the Scales of Reason, I am assur'd of my Forgiveness." Act III scene ii returns to Moody's house where, after still more tricks are played upon the Squire, that poor simpleton finds himself wed to a kept mistress while Caelia and Clerimont, Lettice and Davy are married with old Moody's blessing.

The closing scene of Act III is once more on board a ship at sea, where Mirza explains his actions to Sebastian as music is heard in the air and Neptune rises to "a Symphony of soft Music, attended by Tritons," and Neptune and the Chorus celebrate the "generous motives" of Freemasonry.

The original cast of this opera included: Barcock, as the King of Tunis; Paget, Mirza; Oates, Sebastian; Fielding, Clerimont; Burnett, Sir Jasper Moody; Berry, Squire Noodle; Smith, Doodle; Excell, Davy; Brogden, Captain; Queen, Mrs. Kilby; Maria, Miss Oates; Caelia, Mrs. Grace; Jacinta, Miss Williams; Jenny, Mrs. Stevens; Lettice, Mrs. Roberts.[10] When the company moved to Southwark Fair cast changes were effected at the Oates-Fielding Booth, with Henry Woodward taking over from Fielding as Clerimont, Fielding replacing Barcock as the King, and Young Bencraft replacing Smith as Doodle.

After fifty-six or more performances at the fairs the opera was



transferred for three performances to the Haymarket Theatre on 28 and 30 December 1730 and 1 January 1731. For this more prestigious theatre the cast was made up of regulars from the season's roster: Furnivall, King of Tunis; Jones, Mirza; Lacy, Sebastian; Mullart, Clerimont; Hallam, Sir Jasper Moody; Woodward, Noodle; Reynolds, Doodle; Ayres, Davy; Mrs. Woodward, Queen; Mrs. Lacy, Maria; Mrs. Nokes, Caelia; Mrs. Mullart, Lettice; Miss Price, Jenny; Miss Palms, Jacinta. During its brief sojourn at the Haymarket the opera was played as a mainpiece and advertised as "With Additions.[11] Oates played the piece at Drury Lane as an afterpiece to *The Double Gallant* for his benefit on 3 May 1731.[12]

In the following season, 1731-32, the opera was performed for two weeks at Southwark Fair (8-22 September) and then transferred to Yeates' Great Booth at Bartholomew Fair on 24 September. Meanwhile, in the Fielding-Hippisley-Hall Booth, Bartholomew Fair, there appeared another opera billed as "by the author of *The Generous Freemason*" which had fraternal overtones. It was called *The Emperor of China, Grand Volgi; or, The Constant Couple and Virtue Rewarded* and played on 24 September 1731. At first glance this second Chetwood opera would appear to have been *The Generous Freemason* under a different title. But not so, if we note that the Society of the Gormogons, a rival fraternity bent on ridicule of Freemasons at that time, styled its chief officers the "Grand Volgi" and claimed descent from the ancient Chinese.[13] With Masonic brethren such as Hippisley, Hall, Roberts, Penkethman, Berry, and Excell in the company, Chetwood seems to have intended the satirizing of this rival society, and the cast listed for the performance would seem to bear this out: Emperor, Roberts; Shallow, Hippisley, "the first time of his appearing at the Fair;" Carlos, Huddy; Hali, Roscoe; Eugenio, Cross; Fidelia, Mrs. Templer; Isabella, Mrs. Grace; Robin Booby, Hall; Sir Arthur Addlepot, Penkethman; Freelove, Berry; Sly, Rainton, Sr.; Smart, Excell; Loveit, Mrs. Egelton.[14] This is one of those occasions remarked upon by Sybil Rosenfeld in *Theatre of the London Fairs* (1960) when she describes the actors as sometimes playing roles at two different theatres or booths on the same day.[15] Nothing more is known of this opera; it is not noticed by Genest and his contemporaries.

Five years later *The Generous Freemason* was again revived at Lincoln's Inn Fields as an afterpiece to *The Beaux' Stratagem,* a benefit for James Oates on 16 June 1736 and advertised as with "a new Prologue in Praise of Masonry suitable to the occasion."[16] And yet another production was mounted in 1741 at Lee and Woodward's Great Theatrical Til'd Booth near the Turnpike, Tottenham Court Fair, for fourteen or more performances (4-18 August) before transferring to the New Wells Theatre,

Clerkenwell, for another fourteen days (24 August through 7 September).[17] In all, *The Generous Freemason* achieved some 145 or more performances before it was finally discarded. I agree with Allardyce Nicoll when he commented: "Altogether this is one of the best ballad-operas of these years."[18]

But 1731 was to see another and far greater triumph for the cause of Freemasonry. This was the appearance of George Lillo's *George Barnwell; or, The London Merchant* on 22 June 1731 in Theophilus Cibber's summer season at Drury Lane. This extraordinary domestic tragedy achieved a run of seventeen performances at Drury Lane, with subsequent performances at Bullock's Booth, Bartholomew Fair, 26 August through 7 September, and the Great Theatrical Booth in Half Moon Yard, Southwark Fair, 8 September through 21 September.[19] Cibber, Jr., explained that "... As this was almost a new species of tragedy, wrote on a very uncommon subject, he [Lillo] rather chose it should take its fate in the summer, than run the more hazardous fate of encountering the winter critics...."[20] So great was its success that Cibber, Jr., gave Lillo three author's benefits during his summer run, the third of which occasioned comment in the *Daily Post,* 22 July 1731, that "*George Barnwell* was perform'd ... with great Applause, to a crowded Audience, there being present most of the eminent Merchants of the City of London; they appear'd greatly pleased with the Play and Performance."[21] When the season opened in the fall, George II and Queen Caroline were pleased to command a performance of the tragedy on 28 October, and a final benefit for Lillo and *The London Merchant* was given on 9 December, again "at the Particular Desire of several Persons of Quality and Distinction and Eminent Merchants of the City of London."

Elsewhere I have examined the traditions and teachings of Freemasonry as I believe them reflected in Lillo's tragedy.[22] It is convenient here to connect the play specifically to the Fraternity. Sixty-five members of the Bear and Harrow Lodge in Butcher Row (now St. George's Lodge and Corner Stone No. 5) attended a lodge meeting in 1730 and were so recorded in the Minutes.[23] Five of these members are of interest to theatre historians: "Mr. Quinn, Mr. Cibber Jun[r], Mr. Delane, Mr. Hogarth, Mr. Giffard." All, excepting Hogarth, were members or managers of London theatre companies. The season 1730-31 found James Quin at Lincoln's Inn Fields, Cibber, Jr., at Drury Lane, Henry Giffard about to become manager of Goodman's Fields, with Dennis Delane entering upon a four-year apprenticeship to Giffard in his new venture.

This fraternal relationship is important when we consider what is known of initial performances of the Lillo tragedy. After Cibber's success with the play at Drury Lane, Henry Giffard was allowed to open his management of



the newly-decorated Goodman's Fields Theatre with the same piece; and soon both Drury Lane and Goodman's Fields were offering *The London Merchant* on successive evenings, and stage history clearly reveals Masonic support throughout the eighteenth century.

After the first performance at Drury Lane on 22 June 1731 a second performance on Friday, 25 June, was billed as at "common prices." But then special advertising was begun, and the nights of 2, 6, 9, 13, 16 July were billed as "At the Particular Desire of several Persons of Distinction and eminent Merchants of the City of London." Freemasonry was the only influence at the time which could unite "Persons of Quality and Distinction" with "eminent Merchants of the City of London." Thus with Masonic support *The London Merchant* achieved 204 performances during the century, thirty-two of them bearing specific Masonic advertisements.

While there is no evidence that the Masonic oratorio, *Solomon's Temple,* was performed professionally in London, it was doubtless known and performed in Masonic Lodges there following its initial presentation at the Philharmonic Room in Dublin. Certainly it was important enough to be included in Stephen Jones's *Masonic Miscellanies, in Poetry and Prose* (London, 1797).[24] The libretto is captioned: "*Solomon's Temple,* An Oratorio, as it was performed at the Philharmonic Room, Dublin, for the benefit of sick and distressed Freemasons. The Words by Mr. James Eyre Weekes. The Music composed by Mr. Richard Broadway, Organist of St. Patrick's Cathedral." The oratorio calls for five soloists: Solomon, the Grand Master; the High Priest; Hiram, the Workman; Uriel, Angel of the Sun; and Sheba, Queen of the South. There is also a Chorus of Priests and Nobles.

In Act I recitatives Solomon is preparing to build the Temple, accompanied by his High Priest; and Uriel, Angel of the Sun, appears to bless the occasion. The Chorus sings "To Heav'ns high Architect," and the recitatives rehearse Biblical history from Adam to Noah's Flood, to David being prohibited from building because of his sins, and finally to his son Solomon. Then the Chorus calls upon Solomon to build. Hiram declares that the Temple will not be another Tower of Babel, while Uriel salutes the occasion with

> Behold, my brethren of the sky,
> The work begins, worthy of an angel's eye.

to which the Chorus replies:

> Be present, all ye heavenly host;
> The work begins — The Lord defrays the cost!

Act II scene i brings a Messenger to announce the visit of the Queen of Sheba, and Solomon commands Hiram to greet her. Sheba enters and sings her praise, her gifts, and her heart. Scene ii presents a view of the newly-constructed Temple. The High Priest declares that the Queen of Sheba will return to her own lands praising Solomon, while Hiram declares that this Temple is richer than Sheba's beauty, but Masons "know how to honour the pledge of love." Then Sheba and Solomon join to sing a duet:

*Sheba* One gem beyond the rest I see,
And charming Solomon is he.
*Solomon* One gem beyond the rest I see,
Fairest of fair-ones, thou art she.
*Sheba* Oh thou surpassing all men wise!
*Solomon* And thine excelling women's eyes.

Hiram closes the scene with

*Hiram* Wisdom and beauty both combine,
Our art to raise, our hearts to join.

while the Chorus sings "Give to Masonry the prize . . . Beauty and order reign above."

The final Masonic dramatic piece was a pantomime called *Harlequin Freemason* and produced at Covent Garden Theatre late in the century. On Friday, 29 December 1780, an advertisement in the *London Chronicle* and other newspapers gave notice:

> At the Theatre-Royal in Covent Garden. This Day will be presented *The Suspicious Husband* . . . To which will be added (first time) a new Pantomime call'd Harlequin Freemason. To conclude with a Procession of the Principal Grand Masters, from the Creation to the present Century, dressed in the Habits of their respective Ages and Countries. With new Music, Scenes, Dresses, Pageants, and Decorations. The paintings executed by Richards, Carver, Hodgins, and assistants. Books of the Songs, with an Explanation of the Pageants, to be had at the Theatre. Nothing under full price will be taken.

This was a joint effort by Charles Dibdin and James Messink which was received by the public with enthusiasm for a total of sixty-three performances in 1780-81 and 1781-82. While the pantomime text is not extant, the newspapers of 30 December 1780 gave fulsome accounts of its plot. The critic in the *London Chronicle* wrote:

> The opening scene is conformable to an Opinion held by all Freemasons, namely, 'that the Original of Architecture is taken from that great building, MAN.' Conformable whereunto three Masons are discovered at work on a Figure, representing a man, composed of the different Orders of Architecture,



> as, The head, of the Composite — The Arms, of the Corinthian — The Body, of the Ionic — The Thighs, of the Doric — and the Legs, of the Tuscan. On the signal for leaving Work they depart, when the shade of Hiram Abiff (Grand Warden to King Solomon, and his Assistant in building the Temple) rises. From the aforesaid Stone Figure he produces an Harlequin; gives him a Mason's Apron, instructs him in the use of Tools, and endows a Trowel with Magic Power which is to assist him in all his difficulties; then he leaves him. Harlequin's first sight of Columbine (who is the daughter of a Jew) is with her Father while he is surveying a house which he is about to have built: and the first proof Harlequin gives of the virtue of the Trowel is by showing the Building completed at a touch. . . . The second Exertion of Harlequin's Trowel is among a group of Peasants at the Alps, by raising a Temple of Bacchus; and the next by a Representation of the wooden building in Covent Garden where the Aloe was shown. Many more adventures are introduced, and Changes of Scenery particularly a Frost Scene in Holland, with Skaiters, to a tumultuous Sea, a Court of Justice to the Market at Billingsgate; and the whole interspersed with occasional Airs, Catches, and Choruses, till Hiram Abiff again appears, and obtains the old Jew's consent to the Marriage of Harlequin and his Daughter. This Point settled, he signifies the necessity of his Attendance at a Grand Lodge; it being the Anniversary Feast to install a new Grand Master of the Antient and Noble Order of Free and Accepted Masons. This naturally introduces a Procession, wherein, by a regular succession of all the principal Grand Masters, from Enoch to the present time, the Antiquity, Advancement, and Dignity of Masonry are illustrated in a pleasing and instructive Manner.

A writer in *The Lady's Magazine* may have been a Freemason and comments:

> A new pantomime obviously prepared with great pains, and at great expense, was performed, December 29, at Covent-Garden Theatre, for the first time, under the title of Harlequin Free-Mason. To give the reader any tolerable idea of a representation so mixed, so incongruous, and generally so unconnected as a modern pantomime, is at all times a difficult and frequently an impracticable attempt; but when a pantomime is founded on masonry, it must strike every observer, that as the essence of the entertainment is avowedly wrapped in mystery, the difficulty must be doubled, and that none but a brother of the art can unfold, and explain the ceremonies of the night. Without attempting to display any knowledge and skill in masonry (for we are determined not to betray any of the secrets of the art) we shall proceed in the plainest and most homely language to describe the works of the first evening, performed in the grand lodge of Covent-garden Theatre.[25]

After warning his readers that "The pantomime part of this entertainment is light and rather thinner of business than usual," and complimenting the work of the scene painters, he says of the grand procession:

The procession (the idea of which is evidently taken from the procession in Mr. Garrick's entertainment of the Jubilee) is as grand and splendid a theatrical pageant as ever was seen, since pageantry became a vice of the stage; and when we say this, we are aware that we speak boldly.

The *Morning Post* seems to have been a lone voice in frowning upon pantomimic entertainments, for on 30 December 1780 it carried the following comment:

> . . . we shall content ourselves with laying before our readers a faithful narrative of the incidents and scenes exhibited in the new pantomime, without pretending to pass any censure on a kind of performance the absurdity of which no one in his sense ever disputed.

The writer was especially offended by an action in which "A Dutch Gentleman, whom the Jew had designed for his Son-in-law, sends him a pig which makes him fly into a violent passion."

Three copies of the songs in *Harlequin Freemason* have survived. Two dated 1780 are in private hands and one dated 1781, possibly a "Third Edition," is in the library of the Supreme Council 33° in London. The title page reads: "Songs, Duettos, Glees, &c. in the PANTOMIME of HARLEQUIN FREE-MASON. Price Six-Pence. / Songs, Duettos, Glees, Catches, &c. with an EXPLANATION OF THE PROCESSION in the PANTOMIME of HARLEQUIN FREE-MASON, As Performed at the THEATRE-ROYAL in COVENT GARDEN. / A NEW EDITION. LONDON, Printed for G. Kearsley, Fleet-Street, MDCCLXXXI." The libretto includes the following Airs: Mason's Glee — "Behold the model of our art"; "In all your dealings take good care"; Master Mason — "The Sun's a Free-Mason, he works all the day"; Temple of Bacchus — "At a jovial meeting of Gods once on high"; and "Hail masonry, thou craft divine!" Four recitatives are sung by Hiram Abiff, a duet by the Skaters, "This bleak and frosty morning," a Catch sung by the Lawyers, "Lawyer Brief, why all this stir?," and three numbers for the Chorus: "So do we, our labour done," "Your cymbals tune, your voices raise," and "Fill a capacious bowl / While we proclaim, / The mason's fame."

The remainder of the songbook is devoted to the "Order and EXPLANATION of the PROCESSION of the principal GRAND MASTERS FROM THE CREATION to the PRESENT CENTURY." Twenty banners separated the groups in procession as follows:

I. ENOCH — Two men bearing Pillars.
II. NIMROD — Four Hunters. Two Men bearing the Tower of Babel.
III. MITZRAIN — Two Attendants. Two carrying the Pyramid.
IV. Six Soldiers — Four trumpets. Six Singers. Ditto 4 Boys. High Priest. Throne, with Solomon; on one side Hiram Abiff, the other, Hiram, King of Tyre.
V. Queen of Sheba — Four Egyptian Virgins bearing Vases. Four Men bearing the Temple.
VI. Darius Hystaspes — Zoroaster. Two, bearing the Temple of the Sun.
VII. Augustus Caesar — Agrippa — Two Soldiers. Two, bearing the Pantheon.
VIII. Titus Vespasian — A Soldier bound, who fired the Temple. Two Guards — Two, bearing the Temple on fire.
IX. Constantine — Two Roman Senators. Four, carrying the Triumphal Arch.
X. William the Conqueror — Britannia — Gundolph De Montgomery. Two, bearing the Tower of London.
XI. Edward III — Black Prince. King John of France and his son Philip in chains. Lord Audley. Two, bearing Windsor Castle.
XII. Elizabeth — Essex — Sir Walter Raleigh. Four Master Masons with Aprons.
XIII. Pope Julius II — Michael Angelo — Pramante — Raphael — Jocunde — San Gallo. Two, bearing St. Peter's.
XIV. James I — Inigo Jones. Two, bearing Whitehall — Guy Fawkes — Sir Thomas Pervit — A Nobleman.
XV. Charles II — Sir William Davenant — Killigrew — General Monk — Dutch Captain. Two, bearing the Monument.
XVI. William III — Queen Mary. Two to carry the Obelisk.
XVII. Sir Christopher Wren — Two Noblemen. Two, bearing St. Paul's.
XVIII. Two, bearing Insignia — Six Knights Templars.
XIX. Royal Arch — Six Gentlemen Masons. Two, bearing the Pageant.
XX. Modern Masons — a Tiler, Four Stewards with Wands. Two Masons bearing Solomon's Pillar. Grand Marshal with Truncheon, Secretary with Cross Pens. Grand Treasurer with Keys. Six Fellow-Crafts drawing the Throne.



Among the audience which witnessed *Harlequin Freemason* on 9 January 1781, the tenth performance, was Judge Samuel Curwen of Boston, Massachusetts. In his diary he mentions his great dislike for the Harlequinade and his enthusiasm for this grand procession with which it closed.

> Accompanied Mr. Dalglish to C. G. Theatre; comedy, Busy-body, — entertainment the tasty peformance of Freemason procession, — scenery pompous, former part to my taste unpleasing — Harlequin in dumb show; why he is said to be a freemason, I cannot divine, unless investing him with a square, one of their badges, suspended by a ribbon and hung round his neck, so constitutes him . . . These species of pantomime seem at present greatly in vogue; to arraign the taste is perhaps conceited; but this remark will never come to light, if ever, till I dare say, it will be despised as it is now relished, especially by the more enlightened class; as to the lower, they ever were and

ever will be too gross for any entertainment above the lowest humor. . . .[26]

The Judge then described the grand procession in detail. His account is quoted in full because it amplifies somewhat the Order of Procession we have just examined.

> After the silly harlequin had skipped behind the scenes, a most grand procession began, preceded by a standard of light red color, the ground of all the following ones! the first contained a scroll whereon was painted in large golden letters E N O C H, the first grand-master; his representative following, accompanied by two attendants; at a little interval appeared N I M R O D, second grand-master, with his representative and four attendants; next was brought the front of the temple of the Sun at Thebes; afterwards, the great pyramid of Egypt and the sphinx; then, front of the temple of Jerusalem, built by King Solomon; Pharoah's two daughters next followed, attended by their Egyptian and Jewish female and male servants, the high-priest properly habited, holding a pot of incense in his hand, — breast-plate, and other insignia on, — closing with a long stream of attendants and servants in rear; next, front of Pantheon at Rome, the founder or repairer, for it is uncertain which, M. Agrippa's name in a list under the capital; then, temple of Jerusalem, built by Herod, destroyed by Vespasian, represented as in flames; next, William the Conqueror, and behind him was carried a prospective view of the Tower of London, as if built by him; then, Edward the Third, accompanied by his son clad in black armor, from thence denominated the Black Prince, — giving liberty to, and taking the chains off the legs of two captive kings, John of France, and James II. of Scotland, at the instance of his son, followed by a train of attendants; the front of St. Peter's at Rome then succeeded, Julius II. having in his hand a crosier; and on his head a triple crown, — alluding to his regal authority: he was attended by a train of ecclesiastic officers and servants, and had the keys hanging from his girdle, as lord chamberlain of the state-rooms in the upper regions, and jailor in the lower dungeons. . . .
>
> Next in order came Queen Elizabeth, dressed in royal robes, and attended by her servants, both state and domestic; then followed King James, surrounded by court sycophants; front of banqueting-house as it now stands, undefiled and undelapidated; next, Guy Fawkes, in dress of his day, holding a dark lantern, — alluding to the gunpowder plot, — he was forcibly seized and carried off; next followed Inigo Jones, the restorer of Greek and Roman taste in architecture, preceded by an ensign, having his name in a scroll, with the masonic letters D. G. W.; then came Charles II. and attendants, followed by the front of St. Paul's, the present noble structure, founded in his reign; at length appeared William and Mary, the former holding a sheet of paper with this inscription, Bill of Rights, — words that I wish could be indelibly impressed on the minds of kings, lords, commons, courtiers and people of this island; for, on the practical remembrance of this short sentence, depends the security of this unparalled constitution, which I verily fear is near its dissolution. Then followed the grand-master, seated in a magnificent alcove; then an arch, having an inscription, *Ancient Masonry;* then two pillars, on top of each a globe, — on one the celestial, the other a terrestrial, — and on a list, by which they were kept steady, was inscribed *Modern Masonry*. The last in the procession were Solomon and Pharoah's daughter, seated on a throne of state, and over it a rich canopy raised by six steps; on the bottom steps, on each side, stood two lions guardant, between them two young Egyptian damsels, dressed in white, — and on each side of the throne, all the principal personages of the procession ranged, with standards displayed, made a grand and glittering appearance. A fine chorus was sung, and when ended, a universal shout of applause rang through the house, and the curtain dropped.[27]



The procession in *Harlequin Freemason* foreshadowed the ultimate union of Ancient and Modern Freemasonry in the new century just ahead. Attempts at reconciling the two factions of the Craft had begun as early as the 1760s but took over twenty years to bring it about. Finally, a "Grand Assembly of Freemasons for the Union of the Two Grand Lodges of England" was held on St. John's Day, 27 December 1813. In this procession may be seen most of the important dogmas which made up Neo-Augustanism, the pleasures of Virtue and a devotion to God and the House of Hanover. And in these four pieces Freemasonry can be seen as a vital adjunct to the London theatre scene, revering the arts, answering calls of distress from needy actors and their friends, influencing audiences in matters of decorum, and celebrating its own very real enjoyment of the playhouses.

## NOTES

1 *Revolution and Freemasonry* (Boston, 1935), p. viii.

2 "The Two Degrees Theory," *Quatuor Coronati Antigraphia,* No. 11 (London, 1898), p. 48.

3 Ibid., p. 52.

4 Some writers state that Sir Thomas Gresham, a merchant and founder of the Royal Exchange, became Grand Master of England in 1567, that Inigo Jones was installed in 1635, Wren in 1698, and that the Fraternity was in a moribund state in later years when Wren's health failed. (See 'England' in Albert G. Mackey, *Encyclopedia of Freemasonry and its Kindred Sciences* [Kingsport, Tenn., 1923], p. 29.) This is sheer phantasy.

5 H. L. Haywood, *Symbolical Masonry* (Kingsport, Tenn., 1923), p. 29.

6 Ibid. Many members of Irish and Scottish lodges moved eventually to London and transferred memberships accordingly.

7 Harry William Pedicord, "White Gloves at Five: Fraternal Patronage of London Theatres in the Eighteenth Century," *PQ,* 45, No. 1 (January, 1966), 270-288.

8 See Henry Morley, *Memoirs of Bartholomew Fair* (London, 1859), pp. 382, 408-9, 422; and Sybil Rosenfeld, *Theatre of the London Fairs* (London, 1960), pp. 78, 88, 91, 92, 93, 99, 101. No one has established exactly how many performances were given each day. Fair booths were opened sometimes as early as 9:00-10:00 A.M., some as late as 1:00-2:00 P.M. —

and some remained open until 10:00 P.M. Ms. Rosenfeld describes the drolls with which audiences were entertained until time for the main performance. But how many performances? Judging from the elaborate staging and music required by the text of *The Generous Freemason*, I have settled for an average of two performances a day.

9 *The London Stage, Part 3, 1729-1747*, ed. Arthur H. Scouten (Carbondale, Ill., 1961), I, 75.

10 Ibid., I, 73-74.

11 Ibid., I, 104.

12 Ibid., I, 135.

13 Harry W. Rylands, "A Forgotten Rival of Masonry, The Noble Order of the Bucks," *Quatuor Coronati Antigraphia*, No. 3 (London, 1890), pp. 140-41.

14 *The London Stage, Part 3*, I, 135.

15 Op. cit., p. 89.

16 *The London Stage, Part 3*, I, 152.

17 Ibid., I, 591.

18 *A History of English Drama 1660-1900*. Vol. II, *Early Eighteenth Century Drama*, 3rd ed. (Cambridge, 1952), p. 242.

19 *The London Stage, Part 3*, I, 152-53.

20 *The Lives of the Poets of Great Britain and Ireland* (London, 1753), V, 339.

21 *The London Stage, Part 3*, I, 148.

22 Harry William Pedicord, "George Lillo and 'Speculative Masonry'," *PQ* 53, No. 3 (Summer, 1974), 401-402.

23 *Quatuor Coronati Antigraphia*, Vol. 10 (London, 1897), 178.

24 Pp. 212-218.

25 *Supplement for 1780*, pp. 698-702.

26 *Journals and Letters of Samuel Curwen, 1775-1784*, ed. G. A. Ward (New York, 1842), p. 299.

27 Ibid., pp. 299-301.

Arthur W. McDonald

# THE SOCIAL LIFE OF THE PERFORMER ON THE YORKSHIRE CIRCUIT, 1766-1785

In the second half of the eighteenth century many members of English provincial theatre companies acquired a high level of social acceptability. Influential citizens ranging from the aristocracy to the military and from the high sheriff to members of various social and civic clubs began to lend their patronage to country theatre performances and to particular performers. "So they became quite respectable members of local society . . . [and their] old reputations as shiftless and untrustworthy fitted only the poorest members of the profession."[1]

This examination of the social life of the performer on the Yorkshire theatrical circuit from 1766 to 1785 is based on four sources: memoirs of Yorkshire performers; the playbills for the benefit performances, which provide the addresses of the company members; the playbills for bespeak performances, which provide the names of socially prominent theatre patrons; and the 1780 diary of Elizabeth Inchbald, an actress in Wilkinson's troupe from 1777 to 1780.

The Yorkshire performers were articled for a full twelve-month season and annually followed a basic pattern on their touring circuit. From January through May the company performed at the Theatre-Royal in Blake Street, York; from June until early August at the theatre in Hunslet Lane in Leeds; they paid a brief August visit to Pontefract and its theatre in Gillygate; then back to York for the August race season, and in September on to Wakefield and the theatre in Westgate; in October they were in Doncaster to perform at the theatre built in Magdalens; and to conclude the season there was a residency in Hull at the Theatre-Royal in Finkle Street from November to early January.

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